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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

As we go to press, we have the results of the 1973 annual MR Associates appeal through the first half of November, and they are highly encouraging. Total contributions are up 14 percent compared to the same period last year, and the number of contributors is up by about the same percentage. It is still rather doubtful, however, whether the whole year 1973-1974 will measure up to 1972-1973. The reason is that, as most of you will recall, we got into a bad financial bind last winter and had to send out an SOS. The response was so good that total Associates receipts for 1972-1973 increased to a record high, about 27 percent more than the previous year. The SOS of course skewed the time distribution of receipts in favor of the first half of 1973. We fervently hope that no similar crises will arise this year and that hence no new SOS will be necessary. If so we can hardly expect receipts from now on to match last year's, and we will be satisfied if the overall September-to-September total equals that for 1972-1973. Still, we can't help hoping for at least a modest improvement if only to celebrate MR's reaching its 25th anniversary, which will occur next May.

It is a pleasure to record that an MR Press book, Lucio Colletti's *From Rousseau to Lenin*, has been awarded the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize for 1973 by unanimous vote of the members of the jury: E. H. Carr, Eric
(Continued on inside back cover)

CHILE: THE QUESTION OF POWER

By Paul M. Sweezy

The Chilean tragedy confirms what should have been, and to many was, obvious all along, that there is no such thing as a peaceful road to socialism. Those who are irrevocably committed to nonviolence would do well to admit that they are not revolutionaries and to confine their activities to seeking reforms which are safely within the framework of the capitalist system. The reason is simply that the beneficiaries of the existing system, including many who only imagine themselves to be its beneficiaries, are not going either to give up without a struggle or to renounce any means available to them in waging the struggle.

But this does not mean, and the Chilean experience certainly does not prove, that in the fight for socialism only violent means are appropriate and effective. It means only that at some stage of the process violent confrontation is inevitable. It follows that the issue of violent confrontation must be central to all socialist strategy and tactics at *all* stages of the process. The problem is not how to avoid violent confrontation but how to prepare for it and win it. Looked at from this angle, the Chilean experience has many lessons to teach.

We must begin by recalling and emphasizing the profound ruth which is the very core of Lenin's great work *The State and Revolution*: the bourgeois state exists for the purpose of

protecting the bourgeois social order. It follows that it cannot be used to transform the social order; it must be broken up and replaced by a state representing the interests of the exploited classes. Only *after* this has been accomplished does it make sense to talk about a transition to socialism.

The Chilean experience demonstrates that it is possible for a government with a long-run socialist goal to win office through the means provided by a bourgeois democratic constitution. Where this is possible, the socialist forces have no choice but to use these means to the best of their ability: to refuse to do so would mean abandoning the political arena to the bourgeois parties. What went wrong in Chile therefore occurred after and not before Allende's election in 1970. And, as the foregoing remarks unavoidably imply, the heart of the matter was the failure of the Unidad Popular (UP) government to foresee and do everything in its power to prepare for the armed confrontation which finally and fatally came on September 11, 1973.

What could the UP government have done?

To answer this question we must recall the early history of the new regime which assumed office in November 1970. The first reaction of the Chilean bourgeoisie to Allende's election was one of panic. The stock market collapsed, capital (and some capitalists) fled the country, production slowed down, and unemployment rose. At the same time the extreme Right attempted to foment a coup, an effort which at that particular moment the leaders of the armed forces regarded as inopportune and potentially disastrous. The failure of the coup attempts strengthened Allende's hand politically, and by the end of the year new economic policies designed to benefit the popular masses (freezing prices and raising wages, expanding housing and public works programs, accelerating agrarian reform) began to show results. The popularity and political base of the government increased rapidly in the early months of 1971, a fact proved by the municipal elections of April which were fought out by all parties not on local issues but in terms of support for or opposition to the UP government. Whereas Allende had polled 36.3 percent of the vote in the presidential election, the share of the UP parties increased to 50.9 percent in April. The UP, in other words, gained an absolute majority and in-

creased its proportion of the total vote by no less than 40 percent during its first six months in office. This was a stunning achievement which may well be unique in the history of electoral politics. It opened up new perspectives and new possibilities. The real tragedy of Chile is that this truth, so obvious in retrospect, was not grasped and imaginatively acted upon by the political leadership at the time.

Allende's election gave the UP control over one branch of the government, the executive. The other branches—the legislature, the judiciary, and the armed forces—remained in the hands of the enemies of the UP. To achieve state power, the UP had to capture these strongholds of the enemy: failure to do so would ensure that sooner or later they would be used as bases from which to counterattack and oust the UP from the executive branch.

The situation which existed after the April elections was extremely favorable for the UP. Two things must be borne in mind in this connection. First, the Chilean constitution had been amended under the previous Christian Democratic government to provide for plebiscites as a method of breaking deadlocks between the president and the congress. And second, the UP electoral program had called for the replacement of the two-house (Chamber of Deputies and Senate) legislature by a unicameral Popular Assembly. It would have been perfectly possible, and wholly within the norms of constitutional procedure which Allende had pledged to respect, for the government to interpret the April municipal elections as a mandate to move forward with the implementation of its program. The procedure and hoped-for results would have been approximately as follows (failure was of course also a possibility, a subject to which we return presently). A draft law abolishing the two-house legislature and substituting the proposed Popular Assembly could have been submitted to the congress. It would of course have been rejected, thus paving the way for a plebiscite. If the UP had then waged an aggressive campaign, educating the voters on the underlying issues and raising their political consciousness, it is reasonable to assume that the April majority could have been held and perhaps even increased. The next step would have been to win a majority of seats in the new Popular As-

sembly. With this accomplished, not only could vitally important legislation which had been blocked by the old congress be enacted; equally significant, the judiciary could have been reformed and re-staffed (another plank in the UP's electoral platform).

This would have left the armed forces as the only branch of government not under UP control and the last obstacle to the capture of real state power. The most appropriate ways of waging this ultimate struggle are not so obvious as those sketched above. But one thing is clear: the UP administration should have entered the struggle immediately, while its prestige was at a peak and the political initiative entirely in its hands. Reactionary officers should have been retired, loyal ones promoted to key command positions; the pay, living conditions, and democratic rights of enlisted men and noncommissioned officers should have been expanded and improved; political education should have been introduced into training programs; and, perhaps most important, all contacts between the Chilean military and the United States should have been unconditionally severed. At the same time, the UP administration should have started organizing, arming, and training a popular militia with the purpose of entrusting to it more and more of the responsibilities hitherto borne by the army and the national police (*carabineros*). All of these measures, taken together, would lead more or less rapidly to the replacement of the old bourgeois military establishment by a new one under the control of the socialist forces. When this had been achieved, the process of transforming Chilean society from capitalism to socialism could begin in earnest.

The big question which must be answered is why the UP government failed to embark on the course indicated in either the political or the military arena. Part of the answer of course might be that important segments of the UP leadership did not really want to complete the conquest of state power and begin the transition to socialism, any more than, say, the British Labor Party or the Scandinavian Social Democrats want to pursue such goals. There is undoubtedly some truth in this, but it is not the aspect of the matter which concerns us here. There were also in the leadership of the UP sincere socialists who

recognized the need to establish control over the legislature and the judiciary and at least to neutralize the armed forces, and who yet did not favor, let alone openly advocate, bold action along the lines indicated. Such people might have made up the entire UP leadership without the government's policies having been any different than they actually were. It is their estimate of the situation and their reasoning which socialists everywhere must understand and learn to deal with if future tragedies like Chile are to be avoided.*

First, let us look at the UP's military policy, which was essentially the opposite of that suggested above. The generals and admirals were handled with kid gloves, and efforts were made to give them increased economic and political responsibilities. When the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) tried to do political work among the rank-and-file soldiers, the government cracked down hard: Allende's own nephew was sent to jail for such activity. U.S. aid to the military was allowed to continue at a time when Washington was choking off all credits both by American banks and by international lending agencies to the government itself. In the final months before the coup of September 11, 1973, the Allende administration allowed the congress to pass without veto an act giving the armed forces the right to search anywhere for arms, resulting in a veritable reign of terror against workers in their factories and homes. The military policy of the UP, in short, was not only to tolerate but to flatter and strengthen an enemy and fifth column of imperialism in its midst.

Why? The answer, I think, is a mixture of political naiveté and fear. Some of the UP leaders, probably including Allende himself, swallowed the myth of the non-political and non-interventionist character of the Chilean military. They knew about the numerous plots and conspiracies involving far-right officers, but they wanted to believe that the officer corps as a

* The following analysis is based less on published material than on what I learned or inferred from political discussions with many members of the Chilean Left, both in and out of the UP, on visits to that country in November 1970 and October 1971. Those involved in these discussions included persons close to President Allende and other policy-makers in the UP government and parties.

whole would remain aloof as long as the government respected constitutional norms. At the same time, and in contradiction to this myth, they feared that any attempt to reorganize the military or interfere with its monopoly of armed force and its autonomy in matters of discipline, training, etc., would provoke an immediate coup against which the government would be powerless to defend itself.

There is no need now to debunk the myth. That was effectively accomplished on September 11th, and one can hope that the lesson has been learned once and for all, not only by Chileans but by socialists the world over. The fear is another matter. That it was not ungrounded goes without saying. But what the UP leadership should have known was that if they were serious about a Chilean road to socialism they would have sooner or later to confront head-on the problem of the military. The right question to ask in the early months of 1971 was whether this was the most favorable time for the confrontation. From the point of view of socialist strategy, in other words, the problem was essentially one of timing. But this was true with respect not only to the confrontation with the military, but also to the whole question of restructuring and gaining control of the legislative and judicial branches of the government. We know that the UP leadership did not move on any of these fronts, and it is crucially important to understand why.

The basic reason, I believe, was a failure to evaluate correctly what happened in the period between the presidential election of September and the municipal elections of April. As already pointed out above, the initial panic and ensuing condition of economic semi-paralysis was followed by a recovery characterized by an upsurge of mass buying power and a sharp drop in unemployment. There was undoubtedly a direct causal connection between this recovery with its improvement in the living conditions of the lower classes on the one hand and the spectacular gains of the UP in the municipal elections on the other. The mistake lay in misinterpreting and overestimating these successes, in assuming that they marked the beginning of a new and lasting phase of continuing gains for the mass of the people. If this had in fact been true, the conclusion would logically have followed that there was no need to make difficult and un-

deniably risky political decisions in the aftermath of the April elections. On the contrary, a convincing argument could be advanced that to embark on such a course at that time would be a serious mistake: much better to allow the favorable trends to continue unfolding. If the UP won a bare majority in April, it could be confidently expected that this would increase to 55 or 60 percent in another six months. Then would be the time to strike; in the meantime, all energies should be concentrated on improving the performance of the UP government, especially of its economic agencies and programs. For the time being the battle of production was decisive; the unsettled political issues could safely be postponed until they were really ripe for solution.

With hindsight it is easy to see that this was a tragic illusion. The hoped-for improvements failed to materialize; the political base of the UP did not continue to expand; the Chilean bourgeoisie rallied from its early shock and confusion and began to fight back in an increasingly organized way; international finance capital, led by the United States, clamped a credit embargo on Chile, making the importation of sorely needed food, raw materials, and capital equipment increasingly difficult. The chances of winning a plebiscite seemed to recede, the dangers of confronting the military to grow. The golden opportunity presented by the April elections faded away, never to return. By the end of 1971 the UP had lost the initiative and for all practical purposes had abandoned any attempt to devise a coherent strategy for taking power. At the governmental level a period of drift set in, of living from day to day, hoping for some unexpected favorable turn of events. The real struggle passed increasingly into the streets, factories, and other places of work, with both the working class and the bourgeoisie moving increasingly toward direct action which could end only in the victory in armed struggle of one or the other. And the fact that this was occurring with the armed forces still firmly in enemy hands gravely, and in the event fatally, compromised the chances of a working-class victory.

I said a moment ago that with hindsight all this is easy to see. But I do not wish to imply that it was impossible to see the broad outlines, if not the details, of the developing situation in

the crucial months of 1971. The key was a correct analysis of the economics of the period following the new government's assumption of office. It is characteristic of capitalist economies, particularly underdeveloped ones, that they have relatively large amounts of unused resources—idle plant capacity, unemployed workers, and inventories of raw materials and semi-finished products. Chile in 1970 was no exception. Moreover, Chile had large foreign exchange reserves as a result of several years of Vietnam-war-related strong demand and high prices for copper, Chile's main export commodity. There were, therefore, no obstacles or bottlenecks in the way of a rapid increase of output, particularly in the technologically unsophisticated industries producing goods for mass consumption (textiles, clothing, household furnishings, etc.) and this was precisely what happened when the government adopted fiscal, wage, and price policies designed to expand mass purchasing power.* By increasing their operating rates, the capitalists in the industries principally concerned were able to increase their profits despite wage increases and price freezes. But the fact that they were willing to do so in no way indicates any inclination to make capital investments which could only pay off in the more or less distant future. In a climate of extreme uncertainty, capitalists are eager to grab what they can today but are opposed to making any commitments for tomorrow. And in their long-run activity they are sure to be guided by what they consider to be in the interest of

* Leo Huberman and I reported on a similar phenomenon in Cuba at a comparable stage of the Cuban Revolution. We were, we wrote in the spring of 1960, struck again and again during our stay in Cuba by "the extent to which rapid and important results could be obtained merely by eliminating the worst abuses and wastes of the old order. To put the point in different terms, there was a very large unused (or abused) potential in the Cuban economy and society, and this circumstance has enabled the new regime to accomplish quickly and relatively easily certain things which in less favorable conditions might have taken years." And we cited a Department of Commerce study which said that "few countries carry a heavier overhead of underutilized productive facilities." Chile was in much the same situation in 1970-1971, a fact which was of course well known to the UP's economists. The quotations are from Huberman and Sweezy, *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution*, 2nd edition (Monthly Review Press, 1961), p. 95.

the survival of the system and the defeat of its enemies. It follows that the economic upswing of early 1971 had to be seen as a strictly short-run, transitory phenomenon.* This is all the more so since its continuation was heavily dependent on the availability of strategic imports at a time when copper prices were falling and the international bankers and lending agencies were refusing further loans to Chile. The comfortable foreign exchange reserves of the pre-Allende period began to dwindle on the morrow of the UP victory at the polls and were obviously headed for exhaustion in the relatively near future.

It seems clear to me that a real revolutionary leadership would have grasped this situation and drawn the logical conclusion that the electoral victory in April presented the UP not only with the opportunity but with the inescapable necessity to take bold and decisive measures to wrest complete control of the state apparatus from the bourgeoisie. But whether or not I am right about this does not matter now: the point is that this is the cardinal lesson to be learned from the Chilean experience. Gaining full state power *must* be the overriding objective of a serious socialist movement which achieves office through electoral

* The underlying reasons for this were clearly spelled out many years ago by the great Polish economist Oskar Lange: "An economic system based on private enterprise and private property of the means of production can work only as long as the security of private property and of income derived from property and from enterprise is maintained. The very existence of a government bent on introducing socialism is a constant threat to this security. Therefore, the capitalist economy cannot function under a socialist government unless the government is socialist in name only. If the socialist government socializes the coal mines today and declares that the textile industry is going to be socialized after five years, we can be quite certain that the textile industry will be ruined before it will be socialized. For the owners threatened with expropriation have no inducement to make the necessary investments and to manage them efficiently. And no government supervision or administrative measures can cope effectively with the passive resistance and sabotage of the owners and managers." Lange drew the logical conclusion that "there exists only one economic policy which he [an economist called upon to advise a socialist government] can commend . . . as likely to lead to success. This is a policy of *revolutionary courage*." It was a policy sadly lacking in the Chilean UP. The quotations are from a section of Lange's well-known 1938 essay "On the Economic Theory of Socialism," which is reproduced under the title "On the Policy of Transition" in MONTHLY REVIEW (January 1971), pp. 39-40, 44.

means.* Depending on the particular historical conjuncture, it may be possible to bring about conditions which temporarily tilt the balance in favor of the revolution and against the existing order. If such a situation does arise, it is absolutely crucial that it be seized and exploited to the full. The alternative is to hand over the initiative to the enemy with an implied invitation to use its superior economic power to create chaos and its military power, in the ripeness of time, to deliver the *coup de grâce*. This, as we now know, is exactly what happened in Chile.

There was of course no guarantee that an all-out political offensive following the April elections would have succeeded—in politics, especially revolutionary politics, there is no such thing as guarantees—and it was indeed this uncertainty more than anything else that caused the UP leadership to hesitate, postpone, and finally do nothing. A plebiscite might have been lost. Or, even if it had been won, the subsequent elections might not have produced a majority in the new Popular Assembly. What then?

The worst that could have happened, it would seem, was what actually did happen. But a revolutionary leadership would have had other courses open to it. It could have set about at once, as the left Socialists and the MIR advocated, to prepare for the showdown with the military. If the result had been to provoke a coup in 1971, the chances of defeating it would probably have been better than in 1973, especially since it would have been in answer to deliberate defensive preparations. Or a political retreat might have been undertaken. This would have involved a compromise with the left wing of the Christian Democrats, and its purpose would have been to maintain the con-

* I should like to emphasize a point which is implied rather than spelled out in the foregoing analysis, namely, that the conquest of full state power is essential not only to thwart a politico-military counter-revolution but also to make possible *continuing* advance on the economic front. For this, extensive state-financed investment, massive mobilization of human resources, coordinated central planning, and firm controls over remaining enterprises are indispensable. But the achievement of these goals and activities is obviously impossible unless and until the conquest of state power by the socialist forces has been completed and consolidated. In addition to illusions about bourgeois democracy, the UP government in Chile also had illusions about what could be accomplished within the framework of a capitalist economy.

stitutional regime and keep the road open for a renewed advance later on. This course, to be sure, would have been a difficult one, raising all the toughest questions of political flexibility and united front tactics. But those who wish to learn from the Chilean experience should certainly not rule out in advance the possibility that a situation might have arisen in which a policy of retreat and compromise was called for. As always in revolutionary politics, this is a question which can only be answered on the basis not of abstract principle but of a careful and thoroughly realistic analysis of concrete situations.

This is an appropriate note to close on. Perhaps the greatest, and ultimately fatal, weakness of the Chilean UP was that it had no coherent strategy to begin with, and at no time showed itself capable of making the kind of assessment of the situations in which it was operating which would have been essential to success. If the heroic sacrifices of the Chilean workers are not to have been in vain, revolutionary socialists the world over must take this lesson to heart and solemnly resolve to master the art of analyzing reality and drawing correct conclusions from their analyses.

He who carries out a revolution only half way is only digging his own grave.

—Saint-Just, 1794

CHILE AFTER ALLENDE: A TALE OF TWO COUPS

BY JAMES PETRAS

As the policies of Chile's military rulers unfold, differences have already appeared among the anti-Allende forces in the United States as well as in Chile. The differences are not insignificant insofar as they reflect not only changes in personnel (civilian vs. military), but different positions regarding forms of political rule, the role of the military, and socio-economic policy. What appeared as a united effort between political parties and military officers to prevent the "communization of Chile" is no longer visible. The stronger party to the coup, the military, has discarded its political associates, the Frei-led Christian Democrats (PDC), and feels free to impose its own policies through direct representation in the government. In this the military has the support of the smaller upper-class-based National Party and the terrorist ultra-right Fatherland and Liberty group (together representing about 20 percent of the electorate).

Both the Frei-led Christian Democrats and the military were out to overthrow the elected government of Allende. From its inception, Frei and his supporters sought means to prevent Allende from taking power, and to undermine the economy to prevent his development policies from succeeding. The illegal and legal measures taken by the Frei-led political forces were

James Petras, a member of the sociology department at the State University of New York, Binghamton, is a frequent contributor to MR.

aimed at enabling the Christian Democrats and of course Frei to return to power. Frei had to walk a narrow line between overthrowing Allende and provoking a counter-revolution which would sweep his forces aside—which is what in fact happened. Frei's initial hope was that economic chaos in itself would bring the government down; later the strategy involved legalistic maneuvers centering on winning two thirds majorities in the congressional elections of March 1973 and then proceeding to "impeach" Allende. The advantage of the impeachment tactic was that the "legal" approach would limit the military's involvement, curtailing its influence over the choice of Allende's successor; the votes, leadership, and direction of the impeachment proceedings would presumably come from the Christian Democrats, thus edging out their political rivals on the Right. The right-wing National Party and its terrorist allies in Fatherland and Liberty had no illusions about their possibilities of gaining an electoral victory in the near or distant future. Their only hope was a military dictatorship in which they would operate the economic levers and direct the administrative machinery—in brief, sharing office with the military. Hence while the Christian Democratic Right concentrated on its electoral strategy and parliamentary intransigence to unseat the Left, the ultra-Right organized direct action groups within several private associations to create the economic dislocation regarded as a necessary pretext for a military takeover.

The first major effort by the Right was the massive businessmen's lockout in October 1972, led and organized by truckowners, shopkeepers, and professionals loyal or sympathetic to the National Party. Caught somewhat unprepared by the dimensions of the confrontation, the Christian Democrats sought to recapture the rightwardly moving petty bourgeoisie which supported the lockout, to avoid being outflanked on the Right. The Right did not achieve maximum success (the overthrow of Allende) but did put the military in the cabinet and served notice that it represented a coherent and combative force capable of paralyzing society. Only the strength of the grass-roots working-class organizations and political conflicts within the general staff prevented the Right from "going all the way." The problem in the military was of an idiosyncratic nature: a small group of senior officers remained loyal to Allende rather than to their class, but

did not create organic links to the working-class enlisted men or conscripts in the army.

The advantages of the Right sharply polarized the electorate and heightened class consciousness and solidarity among workers and peasants. As a result, the electoral efforts of the Christian Democrats were severely hampered. What the congressional elections of 1973 offered was a choice between working-class-based socialism and property-directed capitalism—the “communitarian” rhetoric of the Christian Democrats was drowned out. The gains made by the Left in these elections not only indicated increasing popular support for the Left, but also eliminated the possibility for a “legal” coup organized and directed by the Christian Democrats, who faced two choices: go along with the “militarist” strategy of the ultra-Right or attempt to negotiate a coalition with the Left as a means of preserving the electoral process for a return bout in the 1976 presidential election. They divided: the majority led by Eduardo Frei embarked on the strategy of the military coup, while a minority led by Radomiro Tomic unsuccessfully attempted to open the party to a dialogue and coalition with the Allende government.

The *golpista* course outlined by Frei probably was based on the following set of assumptions: (1) the military was incapable of ruling without a “broad” social base among the middle class; (2) the military was politically incompetent and lacked experience, necessitating political leaders, university personnel, and technicians capable of “aggregating” the diverse social interests of a complex society and devising a development strategy; (3) the military did not have a political vocation—it was merely opposed to “communism” and once having eliminated the “enemy” would return to its barracks; (4) the U.S. government (with which Frei had been in constant consultation during the Allende years) would back a “civilian” (Frei-led) government as a means of providing an air of legitimacy to the international propaganda campaign which would ensue after the coup, claiming its purpose was to “restore democracy.”

With all of these thoughts filling his head, Frei joined efforts with Jarpa of the National Party and Thieme of the Fatherland and Liberty fascists in their efforts to sabotage the economy and undermine the Allende government, in the firm belief that

a military takeover would be temporary—a transitory phenomenon—leading to the re-establishment of a PDC government.

Toward the fall of the democratically elected Allende government the Christian Democrats made a number of important contributions: the major political force among the opposition, they blocked all legislation that could have eased recurring economic crises; their supporters in industry, business, academia, and government undermined policy directives and the circulation of goods; on the political front the PDC provided the legal cover for a coup by declaring the government “illegal” and pressuring it to include pro-coup officers in the highest executive offices. For their exemplary services in destroying the democratically elected government and its supporters both before and after the coup, the Frei-led forces hoped to be rewarded with the presidency. They were soon to be disappointed.

In the midst of civilian co-ordinated lockouts, professional association strikes, and street demonstrations, the military seized power on September 11. Shortly thereafter Frei issued his endorsement of the coup, calling on the military to finish its “task” and then reminding the generals and admirals to return the country to democracy. In other words, the Christian Democratic leadership endorsed not only the coup but also the other “tasks,” such as exterminating the leftist parties, on condition that the military confine itself to changing the rules of the parliamentary game for some of the players—not the name of the game. The Christian Democratic conception of the coup thus followed a pattern similar to that put forth by the ultra-Right before the seizure of power and immediately thereafter. The major difference was over the political goals of the coup, over the institutional forms which would emerge subsequent to the destruction of the Left. The competition between the right-wing Christian Democrats and their ultra-right-wing colleagues was over who would exercise political hegemony over the armed forces. The National Party had one advantage—it had no vested interest in disbanding the military dictatorship in favor of a parliamentary regime but only in shaping the military’s socio-economic policy. The latter, on the other hand, wanted to maintain political and military control, though it was admittedly at a disadvantage in devising a development strategy. In sum, the practical interests

of the extreme Right and the military were complementary while those of the PDC were competitive.

In the end, the military turned over the factories and banks, development corporations, and planning agencies to the ultra-conservative businessmen, economists, and "technocrats" of the National Party—some of them graduates of the University of Chicago and now on the faculty of the Catholic University. Army officers took over the universities, replacing right-wing Christian Democrats; *all* parties were suspended; all the press, radio, and television were placed under military control; congress, elections, and party activity were recessed for an indefinite future. In their place, the military has proposed a new constitution and political structure which would directly incorporate employers and business-dominated trade associations into the governmental structure—a transparent version of the corporate state. While free trade unions have been dissolved and the right to strike outlawed, professionals, businessmen, and rural property owners are put in charge of formulating government policy.

The *golpistas* among the Christian Democrats made a serious error regarding the military's lack of a vocation for political office: after destroying the elected government, the military proceeded to eliminate the political machinery that had put the Left into power—and in the process destroyed any early hopes the Christian Democrats had of reconstituting themselves as the "majoritarian" political force in a country purged of leftists.

The military officials quickly recognized that the Christian-Democratic Party could not appeal to the Left against the military moves, since it had been one of the gravediggers of the Left and was totally discredited; nor could it gain support from the ultra-Right since the latter had no further use for the Christian Democrats once the downfall of Allende had been accomplished. In fact, the Right saw the re-emergence of the Christian Democrats as a distinct liability, bringing in its train a makeshift mélange of populist rhetoric, "populist" organization, and incapacity to control the growth of popular sentiments to the left of it. It was, incidentally, the purge of the pro-coup Christian Democratic university officials which must finally have convinced even the most loyal die-hard supporters of Frei that the

future of Chile did not lie in his hands. Even the *New York Times*, whose columns have been nothing but naked evasions of the true dimensions of the slaughter in Chile, was finally forced to concede that the military had committed “excesses”—meaning that the military had exceeded its mandate (a favorite term referring to the *Times*’s habit of selecting the proper governing officials for whatever society it happens to be dealing with). After four weeks of unprecedented mass slaughter, the *Times* chose to raise in a rather obviously grotesque manner the issue of military excesses—precisely the moment after the military relieved the Christian Democrats of their university positions. Through terror, the military was hoping to erase social pressure from the Left; by political exclusion and co-optation, to definitely divide the Christian Democrats; by offering important posts and rewards to the National Party and businessmen, to consolidate an administrative apparatus capable of imposing “discipline” on labor (with the aid of terror) and securing the cooperation of business; and with an open door policy to foreign investment, to stimulate foreign loans, credits, and investment to stimulate economic recovery. The “Brazilian Model” is being projected in Chile over the corpses of 20,000 workers: salaries and wages are being effectively lowered, prices increased, currency devalued, enterprises returned to private owners, and the conditions created for externally induced expansion at the cost of the poor. In the near future, the middle class, business groups, and industrialists will suffer the invasion of large-scale foreign capital which, in the name of efficiency, will eliminate many of those who supported the coup. Large sectors of the petty bourgeoisie who were in the streets calling for the coup will not be its beneficiaries. As in Brazil, the generals and their economic advisors are looking toward the multi-national corporation and the international banks to reorganize the economy—they, too, have no confidence in the “entrepreneurial” capacity of the national bourgeoisie, in much the same way they do not trust their bourgeois “democrats” organized in the PDC to restore and maintain capitalist law and order. If a permanent military-corporate structure is the political instrumentality of the leaders of the coup, large-scale foreign enterprises are their answer to the economic problems facing the country.

In these circumstances, the Christian Democratic Party is in the process of disintegration; the anti-coup section prepares to split to the Left—perhaps to search for some way to express its opposition to the junta without risking its semi-legal status, hoping to recreate the political conditions for a re-emergence of the traditional parties of the Left in order to form a new broad “patriotic democratic front.” The rest of the Christian Democrats will revolve around the orientations and personal fortunes of individual leaders: some will join with the National Party and become political/economic functionaries in the military governmental apparatus; others may search for some formula, hopeful that the military will give an ear to their proposals to provide a legislative fig leaf to the military dictatorship. But since the generals have discovered they can write their own laws, including a new constitution, and have the unanimous approval of the solemn judges of the highest court, they perhaps believe they can create their own legitimacy as well. With big loans from international banks and the confidence of the international corporations, what better source of legitimacy could this military regime ask for? Could the Christian Democrats match the arms of the military or the dollars of the corporations?

Political rulership, the military has discovered, can be considerably simplified by physically exterminating the opposition, eliminating deliberative bodies, silencing critics, intervening in the universities, and burning books. By putting agricultural policy in the hands of large landowners, industrial policy in the hands of industrialists, and the Ministry of Interior in the hands of the army, there is no need to aggregate diverse social interests: the political system recognizes no such diversity. Complexities and the niceties of political coalitions and bargaining have been washed out: now, as the military explains, it gives orders that everyone obeys. Military terror and technically efficient economists are the junta's answers to the charge of political incompetence.

The U.S. government long ago gave up the idea that a parliamentary façade is a necessary accompaniment of capitalist development in Latin America. The incapacity of parliamentary regimes to offer guarantees against radicalism and nationalism and their incapacity to create favorable conditions for foreign investment have, for some time, provoked U.S. policy-makers

and economic influentials into re-thinking the "best" political formula to serve their interests in Latin America. Brazil provided the test case: while Frei was incapable of preventing a Marxist from winning the presidential elections in Chile, the military dictators in Brazil were attracting loans and investments from all the centers of world capitalism. While U.S. Ambassador Korry was complaining that he had to tell Frei how to put his pants on—figuratively speaking, we assume—the Brazilian military government had practically eliminated all guerrillas, trade unions, strikes, wage demands, thus creating an industrialists' paradise. Whatever promises Frei might have had from Washington before the coup, he had clearly revealed himself as someone the United States could not trust to take over after Allende, despite his espousal of the coup and its terror tactics. After all, it was the military that was willing to bloody its hands, and therefore it was the military which would be willing to take the appropriate measures after the coup to prevent a resurgence of leftism. With the breakdown of the constituted order, and the emergence of a leftist underground, U.S. policy-makers did not believe that Frei would be able to handle the new situation, providing the kind of security to foreign capital that the military could offer, despite the massive and bloody purge. Only a few dissident and peripheral voices of the liberal establishment (*New York Times*, Ford Foundation, *Washington Post*, etc.) felt that the military purge created a secure basis for a return to the parliamentary order and the restoration of Eduardo Frei. The mainstream of U.S. officialdom, the bankers, the international financial agencies, the State Department, the National Security Council, and the multinational corporations have already begun to back the military, its policies and leadership. At best they viewed Frei as a useful but temporary ally on the road to power, suspect for his earlier failure to disregard the democratic verdict of the Chilean people. Now, in the new situation, they are unlikely to offer him more than an honorific secondary post or quiet retirement.

The military is not a "caretaker" government but a permanent political force—the dominant political force in a Chile backed by U.S. economic resources and adapting the Brazilian development strategy to Chilean conditions. As for Frei, his brief interlude as *golpista* has ended in failure: without backing

among the poor because he supported their repression; without support among the rich because others successfully directed the coup. Today, Frei is silent and impotent: *his* coup failed.

Conclusion

The military junta early on recognized the profound roots that socialist ideas had among the working class. Any doubts on that score were dispelled by the heroic resistance in the factory belts subsequent to the coup. The military understood that this profound commitment could not be shaken by a mere palace coup, nor would the workers be deceived by an electoral charade in which Frei would be installed as “president.” What might impress the readers of the *New York Times* as a “return to democracy” would be correctly perceived in Chile as a political farce. The wholesale massacres in the working-class neighborhoods and the junta’s refusal to hand over power to Frei were based on an accurate assessment of the high level of working-class consciousness: no amount of populist demagoguery by Frei and the Christian Democrats could replace the practice of industrial self-management and popular power which the workers experienced during the Allende years. Accordingly, the military and U.S. policy-makers decided that a Frei who could not contain the radicalization of the workers during the 1960s would hardly be adequate to deal with the insurgent, mobilized, class-conscious social forces that developed during the 1970s. Once having defined the final political project of the junta—a permanent military dictatorship—the problem became one of forming the political and economic team to man the critical ministries and agencies. The only available groups willing and acceptable to the junta were the ultra-right National Party, the fascist Fatherland and Liberty, and the business and professional associations. The close linkage between these associations and the government and the dissolution of the parliament and parties thus serve to reinforce the corporate image of the regime. Yet corporatism is not so much the outcome of a calculated ideological move as it is the “natural” form of political representation of capitalism in a crisis period—the embrace of business and the military over the body of the proletariat.

A NOTE ON INFLATION

BY HARRY MAGDOFF

The following is the text of a reply to a request for a brief statement on inflation from the editors of the Mexican journal *Problemas del Desarrollo: Revista Latinoamericana de Economía*.—The Editors

Inflation is a possibility in any society that uses money as a medium of exchange, but it is an inescapable and distinguishing feature of capitalism—and most especially in its monopoly stage. From their beginnings, and throughout their long history, capitalist countries have at times been plagued and at other times stimulated by bursts of inflation. In essence, these recurring waves are both symptom and cause of the instability inherent in the anarchic production system of capitalism. It is true that especially severe inflationary episodes have resulted from currency mismanagement by governments and banks. And even more severe currency depreciations have been caused by armaments races, wars, and the aftermath of wars. But the distortions created by these special progenitors of inflation—currency manipulation and wars—are themselves either products of, or means adopted to cope with, the unremitting instability of capitalism.

Whatever the immediate causes of inflation may be—and without taking into account the inflation-induced contradictions which are resolved by economic depressions—rapid price rises produce two important results for a capitalist society. First, they act as a stimulus to investment. This is especially the case when price advances are persistent and do not spiral too quickly.

Under such circumstances, speculative fever is rife, the urge to accumulate inventory is strong, and the environment is favorable for new risk-taking by entrepreneurs. Second, inflation serves to redistribute income in favor of some sectors of the population and to the disadvantage of others. Typically, it is an instrument for the protection and expansion of surplus value, i.e., the share of the national product appropriated by the capitalists. The propensity to start and feed the flames of an inflationary spiral grows naturally out of a society that is guided by the profit motive. Since it is the duty and destiny of each capitalist enterprise to increase its profits, every practical device for this purpose is seized upon, whether it takes the form of reducing costs of production or raising the price of the finished product. The capitalist is hence always on the lookout for ways to raise his prices. The price-raising path to higher profits is, however, restricted when competition among capitalists is widespread. On the other hand, the inflationary tendency begins to take over as the force of competition diminishes.

The relevance of inflation in capitalism is best understood against the background of historical changes in the structure of this socio-economic order. Infant capitalism was rooted in rampant inflation, the latter spurred by the commercial revolution, the looting of the treasures of colonial acquisitions, and the flood of cheap gold and silver obtained with forced labor from the mines of Latin America. Although long upward waves of prices were followed by prolonged deflations (tied up with alternating periods of prosperity and stagnation and often associated with the successes and failures of colonial exploitation), the dominant and most influential trend during the centuries of evolution of merchant capitalism was inflation.

Quite the opposite is the case as capitalism moved from the commercial to the industrial phase. Declining commodity prices not only became a characteristic phenomenon, but were in fact elements contributing to economic success, instead of, as in the past, accompaniments of stagnation. Reductions in production costs achieved in the age of machinery were reflected in long-run price declines, under the impetus of competition. When there were many relatively small firms in each industry, among which collusion was difficult or impossible, businessmen were forced to fight each other by cutting prices, where

cost savings permitted. The common method of increasing profits was to capture the markets of competitors by under-selling them. Even under these conditions, wars and cyclical booms created waves of inflation, but these were overtaken eventually by relatively long periods of declining prices, made possible and necessary by technical advance and competition.

This type of price behavior changed dramatically when concentration and centralization of capital reached the point where direct and indirect collusion and control of markets by relatively few giant firms in each industry became the rule. With the appearance of monopoly capitalism, a secular trend of inflation set in. Cyclical depressions at times produced a downward adjustment of prices. In addition, war-induced hyper-inflations often led to major price corrections. But the innate tendency of capitalism toward inflation became dominant as soon as monopolistic-type control spread throughout the industrial system.

The contrasting behavior of prices in the stages of competitive and monopoly capitalism can be observed in the following two tables, which summarize the major trends in U.S. wholesale prices during the past 150 years. First let us look at the earliest 75 years of this time span, from 1823 to 1898, a period that covers the inception and maturation of competitive capitalism in the United States.

Table I

U.S. WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX (1823=100)	
1823	100
1848	75
1873	139
1898	74

Source: *Hearings before the Joint Economic Committee on Employment, Growth, and Price Levels, Part 2* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1959), pp. 395-396.

As can be seen, the net wholesale price change in the United States between 1823 and 1898 was downward. In the interim there was a wild cyclical price swing due to the huge volume of paper currency issued by the U.S. government to finance the Civil War. This war-induced inflation was followed

by a long period of deflation, with wholesale prices getting back to pre-Civil War levels in the 1880s. Thus, the height of the wholesale price index shown above for 1873 still reflects the impact of the induced inflation associated with the Civil War and its aftermath. Given the eventual return of conservative monetary practices, the downward price pressure of competitive capitalism reasserted itself. By 1898, when monopoly capitalism was already blossoming and affecting price practices, the wholesale price index was roughly the same as that of 50 years earlier. Now note how very different the experience of the past 75 years has been.

Table 2

U.S. WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX (1898=100)	
1898	100
1923	208
1948	331
1973 (first 8 months)	530

Sources: 1898 to 1948: same as for Table 1; 1948 to 1973: *Economic Indicator* (U.S. Government Printing Office, various monthly issues). The price indexes were spliced and converted to an 1898 base.

These data suggest that the present inflationary process is not at all a new phenomenon. While the rates of price increase have recently been accelerating and while this acceleration may be an omen of an approaching new hyper-inflation, it is nevertheless important to recognize the consistency of the secular inflationary trend over the past three quarters of a century. The year-to-year changes over this long period have been far from regular: each big war contributed to the hyper-inflation of some currencies in the advanced capitalist nations; in addition, the great depression of the 1930s lowered price levels throughout the capitalist world. But despite erratic and cyclical year-to-year movements, the inflationary trend always reasserted itself; at the end of each 25-year interval summarized in Table 2, the price level reached a new high.

Usually when one finds such a persistent trend in economic behavior, it is the result of more than one simple cause. Here too the contributing factors are many. But what is significant is that the multi-faceted and mutually reinforcing pro-

motors of inflation are all related in varying degrees to the nature and structure of monopoly capitalism. The following are some of these:

(1) The new imperialism of this stage of capitalism stimulates the growth of armaments and the spread of wars.

(2) The tendency, however reluctant, on the part of powerful sectors of the capitalist class to grant wage concessions to sections of the working class in the hope of getting popular support for imperialist wars and policies.

(3) The widespread use of protective tariffs and other trade barriers as weapons of commercial warfare.

(4) The greater integration of the world capitalist system, resulting in the spread of inflation from one country to another.

(5) The growth of large-scale banking and credit expansion as financial instruments for the spread of giant corporations. With this comes the larger use of credit and the pumping up of the money supply. (For an explanation of the expanding credit system and its role, see Thorstein Veblen, *Absentee Ownership* [New York: Huebsch, 1923], chapter 12.)

(6) With the possibility of controlling large segments of the market, the giant corporations compete for market shares by manipulating consumers through advertising, other means of sales promotion, and fostering consumer credit—leading to higher costs and higher prices in times of prosperity and to resistance to price declines in depressions.

(7) The tendency to economic stagnation characteristic of monopoly capitalism induces greater economic activity by the state. This takes various forms, including money manipulations and government spending designed to create a favorable (i.e., inflationary) environment for business.

While all these factors have in one way or another played a role in furthering the inflation of the post-Second World War period, it appears that the last item (point 7) has been the most important contributor to present ills. The manipulators of government finance suffer from the illusion that they can regulate the economy to obtain an even and moderate pace of price increases. But the truth is that such “fine-tuning” is not feasible amidst the contradictory economic pressures and the very dis-

tortions that inflation induces. The experience of recent decades supplies ample evidence that the inflationary techniques used to stimulate the economy artificially neither resolve the contradictions of monopoly capitalism nor basically reverse the underlying tendency to stagnation. In fact, the very methods used to moderate business slumps and create jobs help engender new distortions and imbalances, which in turn call for ever more inflationary measures and make the entire economy addicted to these stimulants.

Disturbances in the international monetary system have been adding still another dimension to the problem. Built into the Bretton Woods system was the contradiction between its goals of stabilizing foreign exchange rates and maintaining the imperialist system. The burdens of financing imperialist control, by war and other means, eventually nullified the exchange rate stability. The breakdown of the Bretton Woods system, coming on top of the huge pile-up of U.S. dollars abroad, fostered enormous and rapid shifts of currencies among the leading capitalist powers. Such shifts, and the defensive measures taken to counter their effects (notably, support of unusually high interest rates concurrently with accelerated inflation), have played havoc with prevailing fantasies about the possibility of keeping inflation within reasonable limits.

As the inflation-induced distortions became more evident and appeared to be getting out of control, the ruling circles in the advanced capitalist nations have been turning to the problem of moderating instead of generating inflation. But the hard fact is that in a capitalist society the correction of a long stretch of inflation, and especially one that threatens to become hyperinflation, can only take the form of economic depression. Short of such a radical readjustment, temporary alleviating measures are merely means of shifting the burdens of inflation from one class or stratum to others. In a bourgeois society, this obviously means protecting business profits at the expense of the working class. The extent to which the ruling class can accomplish this depends on the vigor with which the workers pursue the class struggle. In the final analysis, however, the only defense the working class has against the alternative evils of inflation and depression is the abolition of the capitalist social system.

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ARGENTINA: DEPENDENCY AND POLITICAL CRISIS

BY JUAN E. CORRADI

With the military takeover of 1966, imperialism launched a general offensive in Argentina. The economic strategy of imperialism and its local allies entailed the liquidation of small and medium-sized enterprises, the control of large industry and banking by international capital, and the increased exploitation of the working class. The consequences for the majority of the population have been grim: a constant rise in the cost of living, the closing of enterprises, unemployment, and increase in the so-called marginal (shantytown-dwelling) population.

Since 1955 the working class has led the resistance against the regime, followed by the scattered rural proletariat, exploited sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, some salaried middle strata, students, and professionals. Since 1969 the struggle has taken revolutionary forms. Popular insurrections eroded military power. General after general has failed to stabilize the system. In 1972 the military were finally forced to withdraw from the direct exercise of power and to call general elections in March 1973. Peronism won decisively on all levels of national, state, and local government.

The advance of the Peronist masses before 1955, the suc-

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cessful resistance against the military-imperialist offensive after the fall of Perón, the capacity to rally the proletariat and other classes against the regime after 1966, make Peronism the most important political force in Argentina. At the same time the economic and political crisis has spawned revolutionary groups both within and without the Peronist movement. Peronism has been changing from a national popular movement controlled by the national bourgeoisie to a socialist movement led by the working class. This change produces conflicts between the Peronism of the masses, which wants to deepen and continue the struggle for national and social liberation, and bourgeois reformist Peronism, which seeks to conciliate classes and negotiate dependency.

This article analyzes the political offensive of imperialism after 1955, the mass resistance to its projects, and the temporary political defeat of these projects in 1973. The analysis ends with the elections of March 1973 and does not explore the contradictions and prospects of Peronism in power. One thing is clear, however: a new stage has begun in the long march toward national and social liberation in Argentina.

Peronism: The Limits of Reform

A cursory analysis of the first Peronist regime (1943-1955) shows that the project of overcoming dependency while simultaneously engaging in social reform, within a capitalist framework, is highly unstable. The policies of income redistribution effected by the Peronist regime lowered the profits of the entrepreneurial class which was one of the pillars of the regime. The strategy of industrialization which was followed during the Peronist period—consisting of the extensive use of labor and characterized by the leadership of light consumer industries as well as by a relatively simple organization of work—was replaced, with the demise of the regime, by another strategy based on the intensive use of capital, the leadership of industries producing intermediate and capital goods, and by a more complex organization of work.

The transition from one pattern of industrialization to another followed the exigencies of capital accumulation itself. The contradiction between redistribution and accumulation—beyond an initial period of harmony based on the enlargement of the internal market—eventually strained and then exploded the al-

liance characteristic of the first phase of the Peronist movement. In order to recover acceptable levels of profits, enterprises introduced modern technology from abroad. New and technologically more advanced industries benefited from the new strategy while the older and lighter industries, which had been at the head of import substitution, began to decline. As the need for modern technology increased, a pattern of association with foreign monopoly capital developed, leading ultimately to technological dependency, to the hegemony of foreign over national capital, and to a trend toward the disappearance of the national bourgeoisie.

Dependency is thus a two-sided phenomenon. It is the result of international developments and internal contradictions. Argentina reached a critical stage of her industrialization process precisely at a moment when advanced capitalism reached a new stage of consolidation and internationalization. What emerged was a new type of technological dependency entailing, on the level of the relations of production, the decay of the national bourgeoisie and the weakening and marginalization of the working class. On the level of superstructure, the new dependency entailed political demobilization, the dismantling of the hybrid system of populism, and the emergence of technocratic militarism.

The New Dependency and Military Interventions (1955-1966)

In the decade following the fall of Perón, the landed bourgeoisie became once again a dominant political force in Argentina, in conjunction with allied sectors of society. The 1955 political experiment was in this sense a second restoration (the first had occurred with the fall of *Radicalismo* in 1930), this time occurring in an industrialized society embittered by the failures of national capitalist accumulation. In the period 1943-1955 the landed bourgeoisie lost the capacity to exercise direct political control, but after the fall of Perón it managed again to manipulate the apparatus of the state and the armed forces. The second restoration had two objectives. One was to abolish the protection of national industrial capital erected during the Peronist period. The other was a new economic policy benefiting the agrarian bourgeoisie. The first objective was accomplished by dismantling a whole series of institutions created by

Perón. The controls on foreign trade were abolished; bank deposits were denationalized (under Perón, then as now, private banks had to register their deposits with the Central Bank which then controlled operations such as credits and loans); exchange controls were no longer enforced; credits to small and medium industries were cut. The second objective was attained through successive devaluations of the currency, which meant a massive transfer of resources to exporters—a regressive redistribution of income in favor of the agrarians.

A study of income distribution prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) in 1969 shows the regressive trends in post-Perón Argentina. Estimates were made for three years—1953 (under Perón), and 1959 and 1961 (after Perón). ECLA arrived at the following conclusions:

The net effect was a large shift in income in favor of profits, particularly in the agricultural sector, and the consequent rise in the degree of inequality. . . . The more recent shift in favor of profits and toward greater inequality can to an important extent be regarded as a return to the pre-Second-World-War[before Perón] income distribution. (ECLA, 1969, 10)*

It is clear that such policies were against the interest of the masses. Under those circumstances, the governments that followed Perón could retain power only by violating all the principles of democratic rule. They banned political opponents, betrayed electoral promises, made shady deals, and sought to accommodate as many sectors of the dominant class as possible, while at the same time denying governmental access to the Peronists. When cunning and the manipulation of electoral combinations failed to keep the lid on *peronismo*, civilian governments were felled by military coups. Military regimes in turn became hide-bound and rigid, or sometimes, as in 1962, seemed on the verge of degenerating into rule by armed factions, at which point they transferred power to new civilian governments, and so on—the ins alternating with the outs, the lions with the foxes.

* Bibliographic references are given in abbreviated form in the text: author, year of publication, and page number; full data can be found in the references at the end of the article.

The liberal restoration of 1955 failed to return Argentina to the pastoral bliss of 1910. Instead, it increased the role of foreign monopoly capital in industry and finance to an unprecedented degree, trampling on the interests of both the agrarians and the national industrialists, and victimizing every class beneath them (Braun, 1970; Peralta Ramos, 1972; Duejo, 1973).

The counterpart of this economic process in the political sphere was an extreme form of instability and insecurity which was incompatible with the objectives of long-run multinational corporate growth. As a result a new phase began with the military coup of June 28, 1966, which put in power a former Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Juan Carlos Onganía. Since that time, foreign monopoly capital, centered in the subsidiaries of large North American and Western European multinational corporations, has had a decisive influence on the policies of the Argentine state.

The new character of dependency under these multinational corporations has drastically modified the contradictions of the society and has exacerbated social tensions to the limit. Whereas during the Peronist period the principal line of cleavage had been between the landed bourgeoisie and a nationalist state bent on using the surplus produced in the agrarian sector to finance industrial expansion and social reform, the new pattern of conflict which evolved during the restoration of 1955-1966 and emerged full-blown after the 1966 coup, opposed foreign monopoly capital to the popular classes affected by its expansion (Laclau, 1970, 5).

Gone forever were the days of external growth joining the interests of British imperialism with those of the landed oligarchy. Gone also were the tensions between the agrarians and a nationalist state protecting a weak industrial class and redistributing income in favor of the proletariat. Easy import substitution was no longer possible. Autonomous industrial growth had come to a grinding halt for lack of investable surplus. The class struggle reached an impasse. Large multinationals moved in to occupy a predominant role in the economy as a whole, with government resting on the naked use of force. The task the Onganía regime undertook was to destroy the stalemated equilibrium of social forces, stem the tide of opposition resulting from the destruction

of the old order, renovate the economic system with the aid of big monopoly capital, and only then to loosen the screws on the community. In short, the aim was to produce a new type of social integration on the basis of a dynamic industrial dependency. Such was the grand project of the self-styled Argentine Revolution of 1966. Onganía and the team of technocrats in power did not, however, calculate the risks of a policy of wide-openness toward foreign investment and close alignment with the United States, parallel in many respects to the policy pursued to this very date and with greater vigor and success by the Brazilian generals. In Argentina, the capacity of foreign monopoly capital to promote a new kind of social integration proved much inferior to its ability to destroy the older equilibrium. It ended up creating mass opposition, narrowing the social base of capitalism, and perpetuating a regime of political repression.

The response of the people came after three years of insult and injury to economic well-being, security, and political traditions. In May 1969, Argentina saw the first of a series of mass urban insurrections led by the industrial working class of the interior. The masses seized for a brief period the city of Córdoba in episodes reminiscent of the Paris Commune. Other cities followed. I will now retrace the steps leading to these episodes which are historically even more significant than the populist mobilizations of the forties, during the first Peronist era.

Technocratic Militarism and the Crisis of Dependency (1966-1973)

The following chronicle sketches the contours of the different phases of the military dictatorship in terms of economic policies and social response.

The first acts of the military government were draconian measures of housecleaning. Those institutions considered obstacles to the economic designs of the Establishment were destroyed. The basic framework of the economic status quo was strengthened. There were even some regressive concessions to the agrarians. The policies of the government managed to smash a number of institutions—political parties, the Supreme Court, provincial governments, the national universities—that constituted the fabric of bourgeois liberalism. Many of these institu-

tions were damaged beyond repair. The organized working-class movement and the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) were not affected at this stage of the dictatorship. Under the control of A. T. Vandor, leader of the powerful Metalworkers Union (UOM) and an independent Peronist, the labor organization adopted a stance of wait-and-see. No coherent economic policy was implemented during the first months of the regime. There were only stop-gap measures designed to rationalize some sectors of the economy and to curb inflation. An attempt was made to reduce the state deficit, to eliminate bureaucratic featherbedding, to make public services more efficient. An isolated effort was made to reorganize the economy of a peripheral province, Tucumán, with disastrous results: massive layoffs, hunger, popular resistance. The episode was a presage of things to come. During the first year the Gross Domestic Product declined by one percentage point, and inflation continued, reaching a new high of 32 percent. The relations between the government and labor then began to deteriorate.

The year 1967 marked the beginning of the economic phase of the regime. A new economic minister was put in command. This man was Adalbert Krieger Vasena, director of the National Lead Company, a member of the board of ADELA (a multinational investment corporation), and associated with Deltec International Corporation, another multinational that acquired International Packers Limited (meat producers) which has on its board the Klebergs of the Texas King Ranch (Daniels, 1970, 10; García Lupo, 1969). Krieger and his team launched a carefully designed strategy of dependent industrialization based on the expansion of foreign monopoly capital. The means applied consisted of income, exchange, and fiscal policies. Wages and salaries were adjusted and then frozen. Social security contributions were reduced. The regime made it clear that hard times lay ahead for labor. Exchange policies were also heavy-handed. The regime produced an overvaluation of the peso designed to "increase confidence" among foreign investors—they could now purchase Argentine enterprises with fewer dollars—and to ease the balance of payments situation.

To avoid the usual consequence of devaluations in Argen-

tina—a transfer of income to the agrarian producers—a land tax and controls on exports were instituted. Fiscal policy in turn aimed at increasing the efficiency of the public sector. There was a large-scale reordering of the railways and port facilities. These and other measures meant, of course, eliminating jobs while increasing the profits of business and using the state to stimulate private foreign investments. Among the other measures of economic rationalization were a reduction of tariffs, the elimination of rent controls and rural tenancy arrangements, and the modification of the laws governing credit cooperatives which mobilized the funds of the commercial petty bourgeoisie. Just as the wage freeze repressed the working class, so these other measures were designed to break the economic base of small and medium enterprises, a rather massive attack on the national and petty bourgeoisies.

The unpopular character of these policies was perfectly well known to the authorities, who were prepared to resist popular pressures by concentrating power in the armed forces, thus guaranteeing the necessary social control for the influx of foreign capital. As the ruling Establishment saw it, the latter would rush in, restore adequate levels of employment, and create new middle sectors from the scattered fragments of the national and petty bourgeoisie. A workers' "aristocracy" might also, they thought, eventually benefit from those developments. On the other hand, the institution of the land tax made it clear that this time the landed oligarchy would not be the main beneficiary of reaction: it too would have to bow before monopoly capital. In summary, this was the final satellization of Argentine capitalism. Argentina would become an industrial dependency in which stabilization would be obtained at the expense of the wage-earners, and growth would take place through the accumulation of capital in the hands of foreign oligopolies and their local associates.

The results in the short run were of a kind to impress the readers of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Harvard Business Review*: the rate of inflation dropped from 32 percent to around 7 percent in 1969. GNP leaped forward at a rate of 6.6 percent in the same year. The foreign exchange reserve situation was good; the fiscal deficit smaller; wages kept falling. And foreign

capital did flow to Argentina after 1967. By contrast to the period of British imperialism, the new imperialism took hold in industry, accelerating the trend begun in 1955.

In the period immediately preceding the Onganía regime, U.S. capital investments in Argentina had already increased from \$161 million in 1960 to \$617 million in 1965. This flow was less impressive for what it brought in than for what it took over and took out. Statistics reveal a marked discrepancy between the indicators of growth on the one hand, and the increasing activity of foreign monopoly capital on the other. Between 1960 and 1965, GNP increased at the low average rate of 2.8 percent a year, while industrial production grew by a modest 4.1 percent. However, during the same period, sales of branches of U.S. firms recorded an increase of no less than 24 percent (Laclau, 1970, 7). This process of takeover was greatly accelerated during the Onganía regime. By 1969, U.S. investment in Argentina totalled \$1,148 million. Economically, this process can be described as one of massive denationalization of capital. Socially, it meant the liquidation of small and middle industrialists, the final solution to the problem of the national bourgeoisie. Technologically, the new investments were characterized by a high organic composition of capital, i.e., a low ratio of labor to total capital (Peralta Ramos, 1972, IV).

The upshot was a familiar feature of technological dependency: a decline in the capacity of the industrial sector to absorb labor, entailing the marginalization and differentiation of the working class that had been massively integrated into the system during the Peronist era. The success of governmental policy hinged on the ability to compress wages, marginalize the proletariat, force the national bourgeoisie to sell out, weaken the petty bourgeoisie, and produce on the ruins a renovated socio-economic system controlled by multinationals. Since the capacity of the latter to create acceptable employment levels in Argentine society is limited, it was impossible for the regime to promote a cluster of interests large enough to provide either a social base for the further expansion of monopoly capital or a workable political formula. As it was, the military dictatorship saw a rapid narrowing of support and the growth of a formidable opposition combining formerly antagonistic sectors of society: an

indignant middle class, radical students, a militant proletariat mobilized by the unions. Even the landed oligarchy showed signs of displeasure with the policies of the military technocrats. In this way, militarism and monopoly expansion became the unwitting unifiers of groups that had previously been kept separate. The democratic middle class, the old Left, and the student movement had been traditionally estranged from the proletarian masses which began their political experience under the banner of Peronism. The decade which followed Peronism prepared the ground for transcending those cleavages: the policies implemented after 1955 made the anti-Peronist petty bourgeoisie as much the victim as the Peronist proletariat. Now monopolization and denationalization brought these two classes closer together under the military dictatorship of 1966.

It was just when the military regime thought that it was reaping the first fruits of its economic policies, and foreign investors began to have confidence in a dictatorship that promised to make Argentina safe for capital for years to come, that major urban insurrections broke out in Córdoba, Rosario, and other cities of the interior. The Argentine working class was fighting back.

The main feature of these mass political struggles was the alliance of workers and students with disaffected sectors of the middle class. Something entirely new in Argentina was taking place: the accumulated response to economic hardship and political grievance.

Several facts help to account for the historical radicalization and convergence of the working class and the middle sectors. During the initial period of the restoration of 1955, the middle classes were still part—as they had been in 1945—of the anti-working-class front. So was the traditional Left. Socialists and Communists received a share of the spoils after the fall of Perón (mostly in the form of university and union posts), while the regime welcomed foreign capital and applied selective terror to Peronist militants of the working class. *Peronistas* often had to work underground and managed to attain a new political consciousness and new skills during those years. On the other hand, the rapid monopolization of industry undermined the economic base of the national and petty bourgeoisie. The latter

became radicalized. At the same time, unemployment and punitive policies made labor more militant. As bread-and-butter unionism failed to produce tangible results, workers were forced to resort to direct and more political forms of action. They began to develop a more advanced class consciousness beyond "economist" demands. These developments took place more rapidly in the cities of the interior, especially in Córdoba, where industrialization had taken hold after the fall of Perón in the modern, foreign-owned automobile plants, and where the proletariat was less inhibited by past traditions of populist paternalism. The bourgeoisie of the interior, on the other hand, was weak, satellized, and dependent on Buenos Aires for maintaining social control. The students of provincial universities were concentrated in compact communities. Recent patterns of urban settlement produced a constant intermingling of students, workers, and the petty bourgeoisie. The latter was offended by the policies of the central government and more generally by the internal colonialism exercised from Buenos Aires. This pattern existed not only in Córdoba but also in Rosario, Tucumán, La Plata, and Mendoza. These cities, and the workers within them, became the vanguard of mass opposition to the regime of Onganía.

The radicalization of the middle sectors was unmistakable. With the overthrow of President Illia in 1966, they were prevented from seeking traditional parliamentary access to decision-making. Economic hardship, military and police repression, and events in the outside world provoked first splits and then realignments among different political groups. Socialists, Communists, Radicals, Social Christians, began dissociating themselves from past attachments, developed new sympathies, and eventually moved toward rapprochement with Peronism.

New forms of struggle emerged in May 1969, during the popular uprisings in the interior in what came to be known as the *cordobazo*. Moderate leaders were rapidly losing power to more politicized cadres. Young workers seized their factories and took to the streets to fight the police and the troops. They were soon joined by students who had acquired experience in clandestine activities as a result of the military occupation of the universities. Students joined workers at the barricades and defended militarily their own neighborhoods in different cities. The

middle classes joined, in a supportive capacity. For the first time in Argentine history a classical popular uprising took place, linking the force of the urban proletariat with the middle sectors, the students, and even significant elements of the clergy. The government had to regain the cities by sending in armored columns with air support. Only the unity of the army and the spontaneity of the revolt prevented the episode from becoming the revolutionary collapse of authority. Out of these events grew a new sense of power: the belief that the organized uprising of the masses can defeat the apparatus of the state. The events of 1969 represent the popular veto of the political offensive of monopoly capital.

Thereafter, the situation of Onganía's government deteriorated. It soon found itself harassed by the liberal-oligarchic opposition on the one hand, and by militant general strikes and guerrilla operations on the other. Special armed organizations developed within and without the Peronist movement: ERP (People's Revolutionary Army), FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces), FAP (Peronist Armed Forces), Montoneros (the name refers to the *gaucho* guerrillas of the nineteenth century). Their actions were often successful and spectacular. The regime reacted violently. Violence became almost endemic. A wave of political assassinations swept the country. The union leader Vandor was gunned down at the office of the Metalworkers Union. Former military President Aramburu, leader of the restoration of 1955, was kidnapped and killed. These events detonated another coup by the liberal sector of the army. General Onganía was ousted by a military junta of the three service chiefs, who proceeded to install a colorless general—Roberto M. Levingston—as President in June 1970.

The new military authorities tried briefly to "renationalize" the ravaged economy, while foreign capital's confidence in Argentina was shaken. But the process of isolation of the dictatorship was irreversible. Urban guerrilla actions, student agitation, worker strikes, created a climate of perpetual crisis. The military were forced to change their plans. They now devoted their efforts to defusing the powder-keg of opposition. A new wave of insurrections in 1971 prompted them to try a political solution to the crisis: Levingston was replaced by the Commander-

in-Chief of the Army, General Alejandro A. Lanusse, who tried to create the conditions under which new elections would bring to power a civilian coalition capable of lending some semblance of legitimacy to the status quo. For the first time since 1955, the oligarchic-liberal forces represented by Lanusse had to establish a system of alliances with Peronism in the hope of broadening the social base of the regime and allowing dependent capitalism to grow with a measure of public acceptance. It was out of this situation that gradually emerged the decision to hold the general elections in which a Peronist-led coalition, FREJULI (Justicialist Liberation Front) won the presidency. Shortly after taking office, the newly elected President Cámpora resigned and Perón himself, returning to Argentina after eighteen years of exile, won an overwhelming majority in new elections held in September 1973.

Political decay, mass violence, the emergence of novel political elites, have all been features of Argentine society since 1969. These phenomena by themselves do not warrant the prediction of a successful overturn of the existing state apparatus and even less the establishment of an alternative state power. But they are unmistakable signs of radical upheaval. No interpretation of present-day Argentina can afford to ignore them, for they are all ingredients of modern revolutions. The urban working class has played a decisive role in rocking the foundations of a modern technocratic military regime; it has united great masses of the population against military domination and foreign control of the economy.

The events of recent years suggest that reactionary solutions tied to projects of economic dependency bring in their wake a backlash which, under special conditions, could break the machine of the state and establish popular institutions in power. This event could open the door to socialism, a possibility which is not lost on the upper bourgeoisie and the military. The official response of the Establishment groups has had two prongs: political concessions in the hope of distracting and defusing the pent-up grievances of the population now inclined toward Peronism, and systematic terror applied to those who have embarked on a course of revolutionary subversion. Thus Argentina today faces the prospect of a new reaction (the military may be

tempted to regain power, or Peronism may take a sharp turn to the Right) or Peronist reform (far more unworkable than it was in the forties and early fifties), or revolution in a more distant future.

Conclusion

In summary, the following propositions stand out:

(1) An examination of the Argentine economy and society since the overthrow of Perón in 1955 tends to confirm a central contention of dependency theory, namely, that the forces which generate a trend toward stagnation in advanced capitalism countries appear in underdeveloped countries in the early phases of industrialization, and act to block further growth. At the same time, the mechanisms through which advanced capitalist countries counteract or retard the drift to stagnation are unavailable to the less developed countries (Merhav, 1969; Braun, 1970).

(2) The central feature of present-day dependency consists of the transfer of advanced technology to a less developed economy, which is incapable of generating such technology internally. The disparity between the requirements of the imported technology and the social and economic conditions of the host country produces an industrial structure dominated by foreign monopolies.

(3) The operation of foreign monopoly capital not only fails to generate an acceptable rate of sustained growth but also fails to provide dependent regimes with an adequate degree of political legitimacy. In a country like Argentina, which has known extensive reforms prior to the penetration of multinational firms, the new technological dependency is incapable of sustaining the pre-existing level of social integration or of generating new forms thereof. The consequence is a pattern of increased social conflict and political instability. The enforcement of the new dependency by military regimes is socially regressive.

(4) Historically, neither reform nor reaction in Argentina has stopped the drift to economic stagnation. Peronism, however, as the representative of reform, is eminently more integrative and legitimate than its tested-and-found-wanting alternatives. But a return to the internal and external conditions that made possible the first Peronist experiment is most unlikely, es-

pecially since Argentina has long since outlived the phase of accumulation characteristic of that era. The return of Peronism may therefore either result in the relative stabilization of the pattern of stagnation under conditions of negotiated dependency, or, alternatively, it may turn out to be a transitional phase toward more radical change.

(5) All options tried so far are extraordinarily fragile, making confident prediction impossible. In the immediate future, however, it seems clear that Argentina will impose controls on foreign monopoly, especially on North American capital. It will search for a closer association with other Latin American nations (possibly the Andean group), increase its continental opposition to Brazil, re-establish ties with Cuba, and in general develop a more flexible set of internal and international policies.

Viewed from the perspective of the masses, Peronism is a stage in the process of social and national liberation; from the perspective of the Establishment, it is the last bulwark of defense against revolution. Future conflict will therefore explode within this multi-class movement.

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FRENCH COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY DOCTRINE AND THE ALGERIAN PEASANTRY

BY MAHFOUD BENNOUNE

Looked at in retrospect, the armed Algerian struggle of national liberation which shook the countryside and the French political and military scene between 1954 and 1962 possesses a historical significance comparable to that of those great events that have shaped the contemporary world: the 1917 revolution, the resistance movements against fascism, the Chinese proletarian-peasant revolution, the Cuban experience, and the valiant Vietnamese armed struggle against colonialism and imperialism. In the words of Eric Wolf:

[T]he Algerian events are important not only because a small force of guerrillas challenged a large modern army (at times the number of French troops reached 800,000) and deprived it of victory, but also because it gives rise to two influential theories on warfare involving peasant population. One is the "theory of revolutionary war," developed and advocated by officers of the French army that fought in Algeria, the other is the theory of colonial revolutions put forward by Frantz Fanon.^{1*}

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* Notes will be found at the end of the article.

This essay will focus on the French counter-revolutionary doctrine and its effects on 2,300,000 peasants who were subjected to brutal relocations in the *centres de regroupements* during the Algerian revolutionary war. The second most significant aspect associated with the application of French counter-insurgency theories, which must be analyzed in connection with these forced settlements, is "the scorched-earth strategy," directed against the peasant villages.

On the eve of the decisive Dienbienphu defeat inflicted upon the French army by the Viet Minh, some colonial officers were studying not only sociological, anthropological, and psychological works, but also revolutionary writings concerning the strategies of mass mobilization for the purpose of smashing oppressive power relationships.

The first work to attract the attention of these French officers of "psychological warfare" was, paradoxically, Serge Chakotin's anti-Nazi pamphlet, *The Rape of the Masses*. In this study, Chakotin suggested that in order to undermine the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda on the German masses, Pavlovian psychological conditioning and advertising techniques should be utilized. According to him, to influence the masses psychologically to the extent of changing their attitudes, "the essential thing is to appeal to all sides of the psychical complex, to leave it no means of escape; it is not sufficient to play on any chance string; the rule is to appeal to every one of the deep-lying instinctive bases of the human soul."²

But the most important doctrinaire of psychological warfare, one who had close ties with the French military proponents of counter-revolutionary strategy, was a French psychologist by the name of George Sauge. According to William Bosworth, Sauge "has organized a 'center for advanced study of social psychology' and a movement called *Force Psychologique*. This movement seems to have a certain influence in the French army." Sauge's importance "has been enhanced by giving regular courses in psychological warfare to . . . army officers."³ His ideas were enthusiastically received by the French counter-revolutionary strategists. In fact, the correspondent of *Le Monde* in Algeria reported, on February 12, 1960, that "Sauge was the official theoretician of psycho-

logical warfare" among the active officers of counterinsurgency. His fascist doctrine asserts that basically every individual is susceptible to being "conditioned to do and to believe in practically anything."⁴

These French counterinsurgent officers also turned eagerly to the study of Mao's writings on military strategy. Indeed, upon reading Mao, General Chassin drew the conclusion that henceforth revolutions cannot be defeated by the classical colonial wars of conquest; they must be opposed by a similar strategy, that of "subversive" war itself. Besides, the imperialist armies should rely on socio-psychological manipulative techniques to persuade the colonized masses to dissociate themselves from the "outlaws." He wrote that "it is impossible to win a war, especially a civil war, if the people are not on your side." We must fight "among the masses, for control of the masses, by a mixture of organizational and psychological techniques." He concluded that even nuclear weaponry cannot protect the Western colonial powers from revolutionary warfare; "without the slightest doubt, the most dangerous form of war for France, and perhaps for the West, is subversive war, because it can be waged with the least risk by an opponent acting through intermediaries, who can gradually deprive us of every strategic position in the world."⁵

Another French theoretician of pacification by terror, whose ideas on counterinsurgency warfare were carefully studied and applied by a large number of Western imperialist powers is Colonel Roger Trinquier. In his book *Modern Warfare* (by which he means revolutionary warfare), Trinquier asserted that this type of warfare exhibits the following features: it "is an interlocking system of actions—political, economic, psychological, military—that aims at the overthrow of the established authority in a country and its replacement by another regime." In order to achieve this goal, the "agitators" would try "to exploit the internal tensions of the country attacked—ideological, social, religious, economic—any conflict liable to have a profound influence on the population to be conquered."⁶ It should be noted that the colonel has lumped and confused the underlying objective conditions leading to a revolution with the technical aspects of revolutionary warfare. Upon studying super-

ficially Mao's writings on revolutionary war, Trinquier also concluded that, "the *sine qua non* of victory in modern warfare is the unconditional support of a population. According to Mao Tse-tung, it is as essential to the combatant as water to the fish. Such support may be spontaneous, although that is quite rare and probably a temporary condition. If it does not exist, it may be secured by every possible means, the most effective of which is terrorism."

In fact, Trinquier not only suggested the resort to terrorism to secure the neutralization of the Algerian peasantry, but also practiced its art, as an active officer in Algeria, with a disturbing realism. The premises underlying Trinquier's conclusions are based on a pessimistic fascist philosophy that contains an inherently debasing view of man and power relationships in society. This conception of both revolutionary conditions and counterinsurgency strategy and tactics is motivated by his own anguish and despair, generated by the fact that 800,000 professional soldiers, "supplied with the most modern equipment," could not defeat the 15,000 members of the ALN (over 80 percent of them from a peasant background); they were "in general, poorly equipped with only light weapons."⁸

Thus, in accordance with these counterinsurgency theories propounded by various officers and by some academic scholars, the French army established, in March 1956, a center of counter-revolutionary warfare in Arzew, near Oran. The successive directors of this center set themselves the task of disseminating the French doctrine of *Guerre Révolutionnaire*. However, the systematic training of officers of psychological warfare predated the creation of this school. In 1955, the number of such officers had already reached 1,400.⁹ The corps of these counter-insurgent officers, called *Section Administrative Sociale* (SAS), was created by a decree signed by none other than the anthropologist governor-general of Algeria, Jacques Soustelle, on September 26, 1955.

The early general curriculum of the center at Arzew focused on empirical data regarding the Algerian revolutionary situation coupled with emphasis on military strategy and tactics. Gradually, the program was oriented towards intensive training in a variety of interrelated topics: psychological warfare,

Marxism-Leninism, Islam, and the Algerian society and culture. During the directorship of Colonel Bruges, a veteran of the French Indochina war, the officers undertook a thorough investigation of Mao's writings as well as other doctrines of revolution, supplementing them with various theoretical works pertaining to socio-psychological conditioning. The ideas derived from the studies of these topics were integrated, adapted, and immediately applied in the field. According to Alf Heggoy, an American apologist and popularizer of the French doctrine of *Guerre Révolutionnaire*, "the officers came to understand that military considerations alone would not provide a suitable solution to the war."¹⁰

By 1960, the curriculum of this center at Arzew consisted of three subfields of instruction: the nature of the military conflict, the socio-political context of the war in its internal and external dimensions, and the theories of psychological warfare and their application. The first consisted of "a statistically oriented discussion of the number of casualties on each side within specific periods of time. . . . Lectures and discussions, often offered by guests who were academic specialists, demonstrated that the insurgency arose from internal social and political contradictions as well as from certain international forces. Among the foreign influences studied were the development of revolutionary warfare, world communism. . . . Lectures also discussed the chief characteristics of Algerian society, the enemy's organization and history, and psychological action."¹¹

Thus, since the Algerian peasants were recognized as forming the backbone of the ALN, "numerous regional, subregional, and sectorial commanders thought then that there was no other solution for ending this state of affairs but to apply Mao Tse-tung's method: 'the rebel lives within the population like a fish in water; drain away the water and the fish will die.'"¹²

When the French government realized that the Algerian "rebellion" was not a peasant *jacquerie* but a genuine revolutionary war organized in conformity with the basic principles of a people's war that required and generated the general mobilization of the masses, which permitted the ALN not only to attack and destroy entire army units but also to "out-organize" the colonial administration, it asked Robert Lacoste, the resident

minister in Algeria, to relinquish all power to the army in April 1956. The army was ordered to carry on "political and psychological work." This task was considered by Lacoste to be "as important as its purely operational activity."¹⁸ Henceforth, the officers of psychological warfare were given *carte blanche* to apply the theories of *Guerre Révolutionnaire*.

The Application of *Guerre Révolutionnaire*: Forced Dislocation of the Peasants

In conformity with the implications of the various socio-psychological theories and Mao's dictum that stressed the self-evident revolutionary truth that the rural masses form the life-blood of a genuinely popular armed struggle against colonialism, the French military high command ordered its field commanders to clear off the peasants from their villages and to bring them under the implacable watchful eyes of the officers of the SAS. The purpose was to prevent them not only from manning the guerrillas but "from informing, guiding, supplying, and lodging the ALN."¹⁴

From the outset of the dislocation operations, the basic objective of the colonial army was dictated by strategic considerations. Its primary immediate goal was to isolate the peasants from the "outlaws" by putting them under permanent surveillance in the *centres de regroupements*. As the long-range counterinsurgency perspective, it aimed at subjecting the uprooted captives to a "social surgery" so that either their will to fight would be broken or their loyalty to the revolutionary organization would be at least modified, if not won by the colonial power. Finally, a third minor goal emerged from the first two: when the news of systematic murder and dislocation leaked out, in order to disguise and even justify the devastation and "genocide" generated by the military strategy of the *zones interdites* (prohibited zones), followed by the regroupment of the peasantry into the camps, the colonial administration resorted to a well-orchestrated propaganda campaign designed to gain the support for the French effort of "pacifying" Algeria. Indeed, an official note, No. 146/G.R.P., stated that "it will be more convenient, whenever this is possible, not to carry this out in isolation from different actions undertaken in

favor of the *regroupement* by presenting them as improvements in agriculture, communal organization, housing, schools, sanitary services, etc." To this effect, statements were made to convey the impression that the peasants had voluntarily fled from the "rebels" and come to the French military posts to request protection.

By 1962, 2,350,000 peasants were in the *centres de regroupements*. Their forced dislocation was achieved through two levels of military operations. When it became obvious that the colonial army had lost complete control over rural districts, the joint chiefs of staff declared them *zones interdites*. After October 1956, the meaning of these areas came to signify "zones open in permanence to the fire of all the armies: infantry, air force, etc., and by definition everyone that could be found there was deemed to be a rebel."¹⁵ These terrorizing military actions were followed by periodic large-scale "search and destroy" inland operations, known in the military jargon of the time as *ratissage* (scraping off). As a result, the peasants who survived these various military activities were driven by force to the *centres de regroupements*, surrounded by barbed wire and mined fortifications; their rural villages were always eradicated. This scorched-earth strategy aimed at the total obliteration of the peasants' socio-economic life. Their livestock were either killed by the French war planes while grazing in the meadows, or seized and consumed; their houses were blown up and burned to the ground. In fact, as early as July 1956 I observed numerous villages that were destroyed in this fashion in the North Constantine areas. For instance, in February 1956 the French troops came to my native village on a surprise military operation in the early morning and caught the inhabitants while they slept. Nineteen peasants were shot. Fortunately, the rest of them escaped. *La Dépêche de Constantine* reported next day that 45 armed "outlaws" were killed by the "forces of order" in a decisive engagement. A few months later, in August 1956, the colonial army mounted another large-scale operation that lasted three days against a vast rural region situated between Constantine, El Milia, and Skikda. In only two peasant settlements, Beni Sbih and Beni Tlilan, 69 unarmed civilians were murdered. Again the same newspaper reported on the front page

that 120 "armed outlaws were killed in a fierce battle to the southeast of El Milia." In the two instances, the houses of the peasants were demolished.

The distance between the original peasant settlements that were dispersed into homesteads and the new locations of the *centres de regroupements* varied between 1 km. and 120 kms. This coerced relocation of the peasantry into these "concentration camps" was rechristened, under General de Gaulle's rule, the policy of *mille villages*. Efforts were made to present it to the outside world as a humanitarian action motivated by the French civilizing mission.

The Settlement Patterns of the Camps and the "Ethnological Law" of the Technicians of Counterinsurgency

The intent behind the concentration of the peasantry into the camps of regroupment may be discerned in the following passage written by Captain Charles Richard: "The essential is, in effect, to regroup these people who are everywhere and nowhere. The essential is to render them seizable for us. When we get hold of them, we shall be able then to do things that are impossible to do today and that will permit us perhaps to possess their minds after having gotten hold of their bodies."¹⁶

Besides the lessons derived from the historical French colonial experience, the theoreticians of counterinsurgency strategy relied heavily on the structural theory of anthropology. Indeed, they based their entire model for effectuating "social surgery" in the camps on their version of a pseudo-ethnological law of Lévi-Strauss. The goal of this "social surgery" was to change the attitudes of the peasantry toward the colonial order, which was objectively the primordial cause of the "Algerian rebellion." This law was stated in the following manner: by changing man's natural habitat and settlement patterns, his cognitive processes which predetermined his modes of social perception and thinking would be altered or restructured accordingly. As a consequence of such environmental changes, man's attitude towards his secular and sacred universes would be radically readjusted.

In fact, the two major French anthropologists, Lévi-Strauss and Bastide, propounded the view that the rearrangement of

the spatial dimension—such as the settlement patterns which shape the elemental symbolic projections of the most fundamental social structures and cultural patterns of a society—generates a generalized mutation. To support this, Lévi-Strauss noted that the Catholic missionaries in Brazil have seen the transformation of both the spatial relocation and the resettlement patterning as the prerequisite conditions for obtaining the conversion of the Bororo people to Christianity. “So vital to the social and religious life of the tribe is this circular lay-out that the Salesian missionaries soon realized that the surest way of converting the Bororo was to make them abandon their village and move to one in which the huts were laid out in parallel rows. They would then be, in every sense, disoriented. All feeling for their traditions would desert them, as if their social and religious systems . . . were so complex that they could not exist without the scheme made visible in their ground-plans and reaffirmed to them in the daily rhythm of their lives.”¹⁷ Thus, by the mere act of constructing models based on oppressive manipulations of colonized populations, structural anthropology unintentionally provided both a rationale and an incentive for the further manipulation of the oppressed peoples.

In accordance with this structuralist view, the French counterinsurgent officers proceeded to uproot the Algerian peasantry from its traditional habitat and relocate it in most cases in the piedmont. As already mentioned above, this regrouping operation was “carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons,” so that the previous social structures that maintained both the cohesiveness and the rebelliousness of the peasant society would be stripped of their underlying economic foundations. This operation was considered as a necessary prerequisite for the “restructuration” of “superstructures” of the subjugated rural society. The overall intent behind the regroupment policy was to force its members to accept passively the colonial power relationships established during the previous century. The goal of at least a number of SAS officers was very ambitious in its scope and implications; it entailed the disturbing notion that the historical collective consciousness of a peasantry in revolt, which grew out of an adequate perception of oppression and exploitation, could be repressed or preferably

erased from the memories of millions of individuals so that the status quo would be preserved under a neocolonial form of dependency.

The physical layout and the sites of the centers of regroupment must be described with the view to illustrating the basic contrast between life in the previous rural villages and life in the new resettlement patterns that were imposed upon the peasantry by the psychological warfare officers. Thus, the changes in the modes of life of the villagers were more than just brutally drastic. Although the peasantry had been subjected in most cases indirectly to arbitrary colonialist rule, it was still at least physically free to move and practice agriculture on the available cultivable lands left to it by colonization. In the camps, on the other hand, the captive population lived under martial law, which means that the officers in charge of a given camp had the power of life and death over the peasantry. Most of these officers were characterized by an authoritarian fascist personality. Once they were granted a pure form of power, they became maniacs governed only by their pathological whims of the moment. These authoritarian fascist officers resorted to militaristic methods in their administration of the camps. For instance, the entire existence of the regrouped peasants was subjected to a military order: awakening to reveille, fixed departure time for forced labor, curfew announced by a bell, compulsory daily report to the officers in military formation when decisions concerning the lives of the captives were announced, and so on.

The concentrationary universe created artificially by the counterinsurgent officers consisted of a geographical area of a mere seven square miles into which over two million persons were crowded. The peasants were in this way uprooted from their rural dispersed hamlets and villages in order to be herded into suffocating military compounds. The purpose was evidently to dissolve the traditional peasant social organization by the imposition of the new concentrationary residential settings within the camps. The salient features distinguishing the physical layout of the resettlement patterns were geometric symmetry and an overgeneralized architectural uniformity. As in a pro-

jective test, the structures of the new habitat within which the peasants were gathered reflected generally the French militaristic linear mind. The methods of establishing a *centre de regroupement* were summarized as follows by an officer who became an expert on these military operations: "To establish a *regroupement* is quite simple. One must begin by scraping off, then it is sufficient to choose an open space, to erect barbed wire, to lay out the dividing lines between the *gourbis* (small tile barracks), to distribute the locations, and to fix the deadline for the construction of the *gourbis*."¹⁸ It should be noted that there is no provision for the economic life of the regrouped people. As will be shown below, there were numerous instances of famine and starvation in these prison camps.

The captives were forced to construct their slum dwellings or *gourbis* according to a pre-established plan provided by the service of the Commissariat of Reconstruction and Rural Habitat and supervised by the army. The regrouped peasants were forced to build their houses and to pay the material costs of construction, although no one paid a compensation for their demolished houses in the villages of origin. Even later on, under the government of General de Gaulle when the French military began to build some standardized dwellings, the regrouped peasants had to pay half the cost of the barracks before they were even allowed to move into them. Cornaton reported that because of the creeping corruption within the SAS authorities, these captives were tricked into paying two to three times this prerequisite sum of money in order to get an inadequate dwelling place.¹⁹ This form of habitat was completely unadapted to the local conditions and to the customary housing patterns of the rural population.

This concentrationary architecture was conceived as a function of operational necessity; that is, it was designed in such a way as to satisfy the military exigencies of control and surveillance of the regrouped masses. According to several army officers in charge of the planning of these rural slums, the straight symmetrical lines permit the security forces in charge to clear off the streets easily with automatic weapons in case of demonstrations or riots.²⁰ But resettlement patterns express the implacable

"will" of the colonial order to "destructure in order to restructure" for the specific purpose of breaking the resistance put up by the subjugated society.

The choice of the site of the *centres de regroupements* was also made in terms of security imperatives. These camps were located either on rugged peaks which were very difficult to provision with potable water, or on mountain ridges that exposed the captive populations to violent storms and to a rigorous climate which overwhelmed the inhabitants who were inadequately housed, fed, and clothed, both in winter and summer. Other sites were situated in the foothills at the bottom of basins that were easily flooded during the rainy season. For instance, many children were drowned by floods in a camp near Bougie in 1958. The installment of camps in semi-desert areas resulted in the rationing of drinking water. Every inhabitant received only a half litre per day.

Once these millions of peasants were concentrated in the camps, the officers of psychological warfare devoted their efforts to the dismemberment of the village social organization, which was sometimes considered as the monocausal factor underlying the "rebellion" of the Algerians. They reorganized these peasants into nuclear families made up of a male as the breadwinner and a female as the housewife who is in charge of the children and domestic work. This atomization of the kinship organization was thought of as a prerequisite condition for ushering in *anomie*, which destroys the social solidarity of a human aggregate.

Effects of the Dislocation of the Peasant Rural Habitat

The systematic dislocation of the peasantry resulted in far-reaching but agonizing changes. The housing structures in the camps consisted of barracks or *gourbis* in straight geometrical close rows, surrounded by electrified or barbed wire and guard posts; the imposition of such a uniform structural resettlement pattern that characterized this concentrationary habitat actually served as a catalyst force that, instead of generating the atomization of the peasant social structures, further stimulated the homogenization of the Algerian rural society. Since the whole undertaking was motivated solely by strategic and operational considerations, the French military proceeded to concentrate a

maximum number of people over a minimum of space. The purpose was, of course, to reduce the perimeter to be guarded. The sites of the camps were chosen for strategic rather than hygienic and sanitary considerations.

Since the adult males either were killed, joined the ALN, or emigrated to the cities or to France in search of employment, the regrouped population involved mostly children, women, and old men. In 1961, it was estimated that some 60 percent of the captives were children under 12. Malnutrition and all sorts of epidemics resulted in the death of 175,000 children in the camps alone between 1958 and 1961, because the daily diet fell to one third of the normal subsistence level.²¹ The internal organization of the FLN estimated the death toll of this criminal policy to be at least 290,000. Indeed, Pastor Jacques Beaumont wrote in 1959 in his *Carnet de Notes*: "I know a place where, when we distributed some potatoes, the people ate them raw, without waiting to cook them; this occurred ten days ago, 75 kms. from Algiers." And he added gloomily, "I have seen, in another *centre de regroupement*, five children who were literally dying of hunger, another whose mother told me 'he is going to die,' and the nurse told me as she burst into sobs, 'there is nothing that can be done to save him.'" Another health officer informed Msgr. Rodhain of the current state of affairs that prevailed in most *centres de regroupement*: "The people in this camp began some time ago to eat grass." These widespread occurrences, deliberately provoked by the colonial power, induced Cornaton, who served in the French army, to note: "The military undertook a policy of pacification which assumed sometimes in certain regions the aspects of a true genocide."²²

But despite the fact that every camp was being observed day and night from one or more watch towers occupied by guards armed with electronic devices and machine guns, the entrapped peasants never lost contact with the revolutionary organization. In most instances the regrouped populations organized themselves into secret cells that were organically linked to the FLN-ALN parallel organizations. As a result, they succeeded in providing valuable military and political contributions. In these very *centres de regroupements* the ALN carried out important "operations under the noses of the guards."

However, the deracination of the peasantry from its rural communities ushered in a rapid process of *depaysanisation* which was translated into an increasing awareness of wage labor, the notion of employment and unemployment, and so on.

Moreover, like any prisoners in a just cause, the peasantry perceived this experience as a temporary ordeal that had to be overcome with honor and dignity. As a whole, the majority of the population was certain of the outcome of the war. The intensive conglomeration of millions of people of diverse backgrounds was bound to lead to the overall "homogenization" of the Algerian society. Urban patterns of life spread rapidly among those "urbanites without cities." What the experience of the camps mostly achieved was not by any means the submission of the population involved, but the brutal proletarianization or lumpenproletarianization of a large number of peasants.

The regrouping of peasants did not end once they were concentrated in the camps; various other operations of *resserrement* (compression) and *desserrement* (decompression) were continually carried out. That is, thousands of peasant households were transferred from one center to another, where they were mixed with thousands of other groups. Therefore, the traditional familiarity of the *zribat* and *farqat*, whose settlement patterns were characterized by small clusters of dispersed hamlets and homesteads, disappeared in the camps. All the peasants became anonymous ciphers ensnared inside ugly rural slums. Their common experience reinforced rather than dissolved their social solidarity, which made possible both passive and active resistance against the military order imposed upon the uprooted masses. The permanent maintenance of the organic link with the FLN-ALN organizations allowed them to continue to contribute to the decisive struggle of national liberation as well as to keep their individual dignity and thus to live the experience of the regroupment as a temporary ordeal.

The Basic Flaws Underlying the French Counter-revolutionary Doctrine

The social background of both the theoreticians and the practitioners of psychological warfare induced them to misconstrue both sociological theories and the nature of a revolu-

tionary situation. As a result of pressing operational requirements these officers simultaneously committed a double violence, that is, physical violence against the peasantry and violence against the role and implications of socio-cultural theories. The peasants were used as "rats" for an experiment in "social surgery"; and the social science theories that seemed to suit their aims were subjected to strategic requirements regardless of the consequences of their actions. In the long run the Machiavellian undertakings of these theorists failed, because revolutionary behavior defied reactionary scheming. Revolutionary upsurge cannot be contained either by conventional military action or by clever manipulative techniques of mass deception. Therefore the French counter-revolutionary doctrine collapsed because its proponents were "like men watching a dance from outside through heavy plate glass windows. They see the motions but they can't hear the music. They put the mechanical gestures down on paper with pedantic fidelity. But what rarely comes through to them are the injured racial feelings, the misery, the rankling slights, the hatred, the devotion, the inspiration, and the desperation. So they do not really understand what leads men to abandon wife, children, home, career, friends; to take to the bush and live gun in hand like a hunted animal; to challenge overwhelming military odds rather than acquiesce any longer in humiliation, injustice, or poverty."²³

The counter-revolutionary doctrine elaborated by the French officers of psychological warfare was based on falsification of both social science and revolutionary theory and practice. Dedicated revolutionaries were perceived as assigning "a pre-eminent role to psychological warfare. Its use is based on the sense of good and evil innate in every human being; if the revolution wishes to succeed, it must pervert this moral sense; the superiority of the ethical code of the West, which is assumed by these theorists, should give it an advantage over the enemy as long as it shows equal aptitude in the use of psychological warfare."²⁴

As a consequence of such a gross misconception of a revolutionary situation, the counter-revolutionary doctrine of psychological warfare contained within it basic flaws that undermined its practical application. By terrorizing the masses the

French counterinsurgents unleashed the forces of their own final destruction. The elaborated techniques of popular deception had no significant bearing on the uprooted peasantry. Although brutalizing in the extreme, the "social surgery" performed by the counterinsurgency forces backfired on them. The peasants who were trapped in the Hitlerite concentrationary camps came face to face with the dazzling reality of colonialism. Henceforth, they did not need their leaders to analyze and explain to them in the abstract the dehumanizing effects of an aberrant social order based on the domination of the majority by a minority of pampered settlers protected by a ruthless soldiery. From a social life characterized by heterogeneous conditions and fortunes, the experience of the regroupment made the peasants realize that they all shared a common fate. If they faltered and capitulated, they would all be condemned to a permanent yoke. Under such extreme conditions, colonial oppression became too concrete to be overlooked. Henceforth, the peasants, schooled in applied cruelty and violence taught them by the officers of psychological warfare, became perceptive observers of colonialist behavior. As such, they informed their leaders in the countryside in concrete terms that the agents of the "civilizing mission" were no more than degenerate mad dogs that had to be gotten rid of by any means possible and at whatever cost. As soon as a general consensus was achieved by both the leaders and the followers, any colonialist trappings were doomed to fail. One of the leaders of the FLN told Eqbal Ahmad that "revolutionary warfare does not require simple discontent among the masses but a sense of desperation and a grim determination to end injustice and humiliation. It demands patience with prolonged suffering, and a determined conspiracy of silence and militancy. The success of a revolutionary war is predicated upon the continual and increasing moral isolation of the enemy. When it becomes total, the war has been won, for the population will then fight to the last man."²⁵

However, the key to success in revolutionary warfare lies not only in a resolute will to fight but also in the way an oppressed population carries out a well-orchestrated and protracted struggle. The outcome of this struggle is thus in turn dependent on the specific tactics and strategy employed. Popular energies

should be channelled through efficient revolutionary structures that must be profoundly implanted among the masses. This is the only way that this revolutionary behavior which defies any conventional schemes can be synchronized at every organizational level from bottom to top.

The overall traumatic experience of the Algerian peasantry in the centers of regroupment sparks hope for the downtrodden masses all over the world, because it indicates that they cannot be put in their places by brute force; and at the same time it sows pessimism, anguish, and confusion among the oppressors and exploiters of all kinds, wherever they may be.

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24. Paret, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
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*"Whatever happened to Lew Simon
when he got out of the Army?"*
He didn't.



Christmas, 1968: Lew was forced to make a difficult decision; either be shipped to Vietnam or refuse further military service.

Lew made his choice—rather than participate in the destruction of Vietnam, he went to Sweden. He's been there for five long years now, isolated from family, home, and friends.

There are nearly one million men who, like Lew, have been

victimized as a result of their opposition to the War. They are presently in exile, in prisons and stockades, living underground in the U.S., or have been saddled with "bad" discharges and felony records. These men are in need of—and deserve—a just amnesty.

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO THE K-T OIL CORPORATION

BY PAUL D. TRAVIS

Recently my mother showed me the Christmas cards she received last year from friends and relatives. Paradoxically, amid the heap of cards bearing sincere expressions of love and affection, I found a greeting from you, the K-T Oil Corporation. The letter was impressively worded and, piously, your firm indicated that it was contributing to "various organized charities attending to the needs of those less fortunate people of our country" in the name of "our friends, employees, customers. . . ." It might disturb you to learn that the widow of one of your former employees would obviously qualify as one of those "less fortunate people of our country." My mother lives in a tiny apartment in Wichita, and her only source of income is a one-hundred-dollar social security check she receives each month.

Now I sincerely doubt that her plight means much to you, but perhaps it should, since the K-T Oil Corporation is to a great extent responsible for the type of life style Mrs. Travis finds that she must live. You might recall that Claude Walter Travis spent over forty years of his existence upon this earth literally sweating out his life blood so that K-T could accumulate corporate profits. But during the course of those years of toil he was not paid very much for his labors. Indeed, your firm robbed him of the wealth he created for you.

At the end of steamy summer days in Kansas I can vividly recall so often as a youth the image of my father returning home, stooped from the labor which he performed, with streaks

Paul Travis teaches history at Oklahoma Baptist University.

of dried salt stains from evaporated sweat covering his clothing. He perspired for you. My mother has told me of the great blizzard which immobilized Wichita shortly before I was born. My father walked to and from the K-T that day because the snow drifts were so great that cars and buses could not be driven. Perhaps such a stroll is unimpressive, but remember the distance from Antlers Street in south Wichita to the K-T was four and one half miles. Then there was the occasion when the coal for the K-T boiler arrived in a railroad car which had no automatic emptying device. Claude responded to this crisis by unloading the coal in that railroad car by himself with a scoop shovel.

Your firm was probably unaware of the frequent nocturnal trips Claude made to the K-T in the dead of bitter winters to check on your boiler (indeed, the K-T executives would not have known what was required of a man to load a Santa Fe truck), or of the nauseating stench of cheap leaded paint permeating my father's nostrils as he brightened your wretched barrels. The K-T never comprehended Claude's lifting, groaning, and sweating for forty years to benefit the corporation.

And now, the K-T possesses the blatant audacity to send Christmas greetings to Claude Walter's widow—a woman in poor health, subsisting from day to day on an income derived from a tiny social security check, a woman who today has nothing because you literally robbed Claude Walter Travis for forty years. What unmitigated hypocrisy!

Do not misunderstand me, however; you should continue to aid those "less fortunate people in our country" with your holiday benevolence. I am sure your contributions (if indeed you make any) provide excellent tax breaks for the corporation. We of the Travis family, please understand, recognize the K-T Oil Corporation for what it really is. Do not, therefore, spend the eight cents which you could give to the poor on a stamp for an envelope containing Christmas greetings to my mother. You need not inform her of your good works among the "less fortunate." You see, my father paid his dues and I revere his memory, for he was a man. Please do not prostitute and cheapen his image or that of the Christmas season with your damnable holiday hypocrisy.

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2. Mail subscriptions	7,326	7,695
C. Total paid circulation	10,346	10,745
D. Free distribution (including samples) by mail, carrier or other means	325	400
E. Total distribution (sum of C and D)	10,671	11,145
F. Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	829	355
G. Total (sum of E and F—should equal net press run shown in A)	11,500	11,500

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
—HARRY MAGDOFF, Co-editor

(Continued from inside front cover)

Hobsbawm, Tamara Deutscher, Monty Johnstone, Perry Anderson, and Ralph Miliband. In announcing the award, the jury stated "that Colletti's book makes a notable contribution to the discussion of questions which are of major importance in Marxist thought, and that the quality of his work fully deserves the recognition entailed in the award of the prize." Colletti is a professor of philosophy at the University of Rome. The Deutscher Prize for 1974 will be awarded next autumn. The jury will consider works published or in typescript which are submitted by May 1, 1974, to the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, c/o Lloyd's Bank, 68 Warwick Square, London S.W. 1.

Readers will be interested to know that MR is in the process of moving (for the fifth time in its nearly quarter-century history). The reason is lack of warehouse space for the Press's growing inventory of books at our present location, but we expect to derive other benefits as well in the form of a better layout of work space, roomier offices, etc. The moving process will be spread out over several weeks and will not be completed until early in the New Year. The new address will be within a block of our present location. In our next issue we will be asking you to note the formal change of address, and when the move is completed we hope that readers in the area, or who happen to come to the area, will drop in to see the new setup and say hello.

Last year at about this time we helped to call attention to a conference on Marxian approaches to history, with special emphasis on economic history, which was organized by the New Haven chapter of the Union for Radical Political Economics (URPE). The conference drew a large attendance and was considered sufficiently successful by its sponsors to encourage them to organize a repeat performance this year, hoping this time to overcome justified criticisms which were made of last year's meeting. The conference will be held in New Haven on the weekend of February 23-24. For details, write to Ross Thomson or Bob Sherry, 14 Sylvan Avenue, New Haven, Ct. 06519, or call 203-777-8284.

As we have said in these notes before, we are glad to announce events, developments, etc., which we think are of interest to a significant number of MR readers and which many of them are not likely to learn of through usual channels—provided, of course, the space is available. Here are two examples: (1) On January 12-13 a "National Conference on Workers' Self-Management" will be held in Boston. Information from Ms. Mary Van Sell, Conference Director, 196 Erie St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. (2) The Radical Caucus on English and the Modern Languages is sponsoring a Marxist Forum at the Modern Language Association convention in Chicago on December 28, 1973, at 8 p.m. Lewis Smith of Fisk University will give a paper on "Race and Class in *Huckleberry Finn*," and Joel Roache of the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, will give one on "The Politics of Wholeness in 'How Bigger Was Born.'"

MR Associates and the MR Subscription Department have received a number of complaints, especially from subscribers who joined or rejoined MRA early in October but have received MR subscription renewal notices several weeks after they received acknowledgment of their MRA contributions. As with all magazine subscriptions, processing takes some time. May we call attention to the fine print on renewal notices which reads: "*If you have already renewed, please disregard this notice.*"

Holiday greetings and best wishes for 1974 to all MR subscribers and readers from everyone at the magazine and the press.

December books from Monthly Review Press

PUERTO RICAN OBITUARY

by Pedro Pietri

A shopping bag is his filing cabinet; after searching for something to read he begins and his voice is strong and rhythmic. Laughter sweeps the room as he delivers his funny lines, and an intent silence at other times, but in both laughter and silence there is the recognition of life as it is lived in the ghetto. No romanticizing here, no schoolbook patterns, no academic influences: Pedro Pietri is a street poet. His lines come

From the nervous breakdown streets / Where the mice live like millionaires /
And the people do not live at all / Are dead and were never alive.

What happens in these poems is what happens in these streets: work, bill collectors, "bullet proof rice and beans," landlords, the sacred phrase *que pasa*, the "long nonprofit ride" from Spanish Harlem to Long Island Cemetery, fortune card dealers, used cars and color television, welfare checks, addicts looking for a fix, installment plans, condemned buildings, the A & P, wash-and-wear headaches, the Avon lady, the clean-cut white-collar executioner who hires and fires. If you live there you'll know it all in a new way from Pietri, and if you don't, this is your chance to see the United States as it looks from the bottom.

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SPIKS

by Pedro Juan Soto

Translated and with an Introduction by Victoria Ortiz

Puerto Rican writing was dominated by the "cultivated" modes derived from Spanish literature until the middle of this century, when it came to life on its own native grounds. The group of young writers responsible for this change is sometimes called the Generation of 1940. This new current has continued to enrich Puerto Rican fiction and Soto remains a major figure in this group.

His writing is characterized not only by innovative technique and a vernacular style which draws on the language of the streets, but also by the new subject matter opened up by the U.S. domination of the island and exploitation of its inhabitants both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland.

The theme of these stories is the inner life of the characters, as it is shaped in the brown and black ghettos of New York, in the midst of drug traffic and big-city crime, in the Korean War zones where so many Puerto Rican men were dragged to fight for "American democracy," and in the jobs and unemployment that fall to the lot of the Puerto Rican. What is most striking in Soto's selection of characters is the prominence of women, and the penetration with which he sees their position as captives fighting to break out of the suffocating prisons of family and society in which they are held.

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